

# **ROBERT C. BYRD SCHOLARSHIP**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Q: Who is eligible to receive the Robert C. Byrd Scholarship?**

*A: Any high school senior attending a public, charter or private high school in Arizona who is chosen by their school principal or counselor to apply for the scholarship. The Robert C. Byrd Scholarship recognizes measures of academic excellence, including GPAs, test scores, community involvement, talent and much more. Students receiving this scholarship exemplify academic excellence.*

### **Q: How do high schools determine which students should apply for the scholarship?**

*A: The Robert C. Byrd scholarship gives local control to high school principals and school counselors to determine which students should apply. The total number of applicants that may apply from any given high school is determined by the school's population/enrollment size. Schools with a total student enrollment of less than 499 may choose one applicant. Schools with a total student enrollment of 500 – 1,499 may choose two applicants, and schools with a total student enrollment of over 1,500 may choose three applicants. A school may not choose more than three students to apply for the scholarship. Students may not apply directly for the Robert C. Byrd Scholarship. Scholarship applications that are submitted without the principal or school counselor's signature will not be accepted. Applicants must also supply enrollment verification with an Institution of Higher Education (IHE). The IHE may be an in-state or out-of-state institution.*

### **Q: What is the scholarship award?**

*A: The scholarship award is \$1,500 per year, for a maximum of 4 years and/or a maximum total of \$6,000 (to be used for undergraduate work only). Funds are sent to the IHEs (Institutions of Higher Education) in the early fall for the full academic year. Many colleges split these funds by applying \$750 to the fall and \$750 to the spring semester (IHEs may use their discretion to determine any breakouts per quarter if applicable). It is permissible for students with plans for early graduation, to use the full \$1,500 during their last quarter/semester.*

**Q: What happens if a Robert C. Byrd Scholarship recipient drops to half-time or part-time status?**

**A:** *The Robert C. Byrd Scholarship can be prorated with proper notification to the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator. For example, a half-time student would be awarded half of the \$1,500 funds (\$750). A  $\frac{3}{4}$  time enrollment would be awarded  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the \$1,500 funds (\$1,125).*

**Q: If a scholarship recipient drops to half-time, can the unused portion of the scholarship funds be applied to the following year?**

**A:** *This is not recommended. Each year, for a total of 4 years, students are awarded a maximum of \$1,500. If the remainder of the scholarship is bumped into the following year, the student is essentially foregoing the \$1,500 award in exchange for a lesser amount. The scholarship funding is provided for 4 years only, and cannot be extended into 5 or more years.*

**Q: If a student graduates early, can he/she use any remaining funds for graduate school?**

**A:** *No. Federal scholarship laws specify the award is to be utilized for undergraduate studies only. However, it is permissible for a student to use any remaining funds at a community college or for any extra undergraduate courses or fees.*

**Q: What is a “deferment period” and how does a student ask for it?**

**A:** *A deferment period allows a student to discontinue taking classes at an IHE and essentially un-enroll for a period of 6 months to a year, or for up to 2 years in exceptional circumstances (i.e., a church mission or severe illness). In order to take a deferment period, the student must provide the Arizona Department of Education’s Byrd Scholarship Coordinator with written notification (a letter or an email) requesting a deferment period. The letter must include a valid reason for the deferment and the date of return to full-time enrollment at an IHE. When the deferment period is complete, the student must provide written notification to the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator that he/she will be coming out of deferment and re-enrolling full-time at their IHE. A Verification of Enrollment letter from the IHE registrar is also required at that time. Only one deferment period is allowed and a scholar must have attended at least one full semester at an IHE before asking for a deferment period. Scholarship funding, after a student returns from a deferment period, is then reinstated and distributed until the \$6,000 maximum scholarship award is reached.*

**Q: If a student drops out of their IHE and does NOT notify the Arizona Department of Education's Robert C. Byrd Scholarship Coordinator, can the student defer the scholarship to a later time?**

**A:** *No. A student must notify the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator as soon as they drop (if not before), in order to defer the scholarship for 6 months to a year (or two years in exceptional circumstances).*

**Q: If a student is dropped from an IHE program due to poor academic performance and they DO notify the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator, can the student defer to a later time?**

**A:** *No. A student must maintain a 3.0 GPA or "good academic standing" as determined by their IHE. Academic Termination due to poor performance permanently cancels the scholarship.*

**Q: Does a student have to repay scholarship funds in cases of Academic Termination?**

**A:** *No. The scholarship does not need to be paid back directly by the student. Scholarship funds are sent directly to the Financial Aid offices of the IHEs; the IHE is responsible for returning unused funds. In a case of a student dropping, the IHE reverts the money back, prorated for length of stay (usually \$750), to Arizona Department of Education. Any reverted funds are awarded to "Alternate Student Winners" chosen by the panel to receive the scholarship.*

**Q: How does a student renew their Robert C. Byrd Scholarship each year?**

**A:** *Annually, after each Spring Quarter/Semester, students must ask their IHE registrar's office to send a letter to the Arizona Department of Education Byrd Scholarship Coordinator, verifying full-time enrollment for the following school year. This is often referred to as a "Verification of Enrollment" letter. This letter must verify the scholar's full-time enrollment status for the following year, and either verify a student's GPA to be at least 3.0 or greater, or state the words, "This student is in good academic standing." The Byrd Scholarship Coordinator often sends out reminder notices in May to scholars for this purpose. However, reminder notices are considered a courtesy only. A student who does not receive a reminder notice is not exempt from providing appropriate annual Verification of Enrollment documentation. The deadline for Verification of Enrollment and academic standing is at the end of June. If a student does not maintain good academic standing, their scholarship is terminated. Funds reverted back to the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator due to terminated scholars are then awarded to Alternate Students Winners, chosen by the panel.*

**Q: May a student switch their IHE at any point during their scholarship period?**

**A:** Yes. Scholars should simply notify the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator of the change and provide a Verification of Enrollment letter from the new IHE registrar's office.

**Q: How does a student update changes in his/her contact information with the Robert C. Byrd Scholarship Office?**

**A:** Scholars should simply notify the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator of any changes in contact information including school address, permanent address, phone or email. It is very important for scholars to update contact information changes with the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator, as reminder notices and scholarship information is sent to scholars annually. The Byrd Scholarship Coordinator is not responsible for important notices that are not received by scholars due to outdated contact information. In addition, important scholarship information/reminders are often posted on the Arizona Department of Education's Robert C. Byrd website. Scholars should check the Byrd Website for updates and important notices at: <http://www.ade.az.gov/constituentservices/byrd/>

**Q: I'm a Robert C. Byrd Scholar and receive scholarship funds from the Arizona Department of Education. For whatever reason, my IHE has not yet credited my student account and my tuition is due. What do I do?**

**A:** First, call the IHE's Financial Aid Office to inquire about your student account and verify that they are aware you are a recipient of the Byrd Scholarship. If they are having difficulty locating your scholarship funds or do not have record of receiving scholarship funds from the Arizona Department of Education, call the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator at the Arizona Department of Education. The Coordinator will be able to review your file, verify that the funds were sent to your IHE and retrieve the original check warrant number, as well as the date the check was issued. You will then be able to contact your IHE's Financial Aid Office and provide them with the warrant number so that they may track your scholarship funds. The Byrd Scholarship Coordinator at the Arizona Department of Education will assist with any issues related to scholars not receiving their funds.

**Q: I am a Byrd Scholar and am interested in participating in a study abroad program. Can my Byrd scholarship funds be applied to a study abroad program?**

**A:** Yes. It is acceptable to use the Byrd scholarship funds to pay for part of any program fees, as long as the study abroad program is coordinated through the IHE. The following conditions must also be met:

- *The scholar must be enrolled full-time during the study abroad program.*
- *The scholar must maintain adequate academic performance.*
- *The scholar must submit evidence of his/her selective service registration status to his/her IHE.*

**Q: How can I contact the Byrd Scholarship Coordinator?**

**A:** *By phone, email, mail or fax:*

Jessica Breznak, Scholarship Coordinator  
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Special Projects & Constituent Services  
Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Office  
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